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NATO

Problems and Prospects

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NATO—UNITY AND REALITY

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NATO—UNITY AND REALITY

The Case for Heresy

One of the functions of a lesser ally is to be irresponsible in a thoroughly responsible way, to be emboldened rather than cowed by the fact that its position is rarely decisive—provided, of course, that its freedom of speech and action is restrained by due deference to the obligations of those who carry the burden of power. Because a great power, the United States in particular, must sustain the framework of security, it is, of necessity, more cautious and conservative than auxiliary powers in adopting strategic and diplomatic ideas which threaten the *status quo* with imponderable elements. This is not to say that Americans have in fact lacked boldness in exploring fresh concepts; recognition of the unique power of their own government to determine the nature of East-West relations has inspired Americans to a good deal more imaginative thinking than can be found elsewhere in fields such as arms control. Yet the United States Government must, by reason of its decisive responsibility, be canny about moving from tried to untried positions, much more so than countries whose heresies cannot do mortal damage to the alliance if they should be proved wrong. This special need to be conservative is something which allies must respect more patiently. They must also recognize that because they are dependent on United States strength, they must be careful not to commit themselves to heresies without being confident that their commitment will not seriously embarrass the position of their champion. They cannot, of course, leave it to the United States Government to decide whether their actions will be embarrassing, because the latter would naturally disapprove of anything it didn't happen at that moment

to be supporting. The lesser power can indeed help by introducing into international debate views held by minorities in the United States—a particularly valuable function if it is true, as Senator Fulbright has said, that the United States has been "narrowing the permissible bounds of public discussion, by relegating an increasing number of ideas and viewpoints to a growing category of unthinkable thoughts."

There is a nice balance of judgment and discretion involved in being a good ally, an obligation which a country ought not to abdicate by becoming a satellite. It has an obligation in the common interest to explore independently the possibilities in fields where the United States must move with great care. Needless to say, an important consideration in its calculation is whether its espousal of a position or even its open interest in a position different from that of the United States or other major allies would encourage antagonists of the alliance to boldness or blackmail, to enable them to succeed in malevolent policies which would otherwise fail. This, however, should be regarded as an important but not necessarily absolute consideration. At any rate it should be a consideration based on the facts of the specific situation—whether it be disengagement in Europe, neutralization in Southeast Asia, or relations with China or Cuba—rather than on the blanket theory that it is *ipso facto* bad for members of an alliance at any time to pursue variant policies. It is not primarily a question, of course, of espousing positions contrary to the known views of the United States. What is much more important is that the lesser allies show enough imagination to produce for consideration or show an interest in proposals which the United States ought not to support until the consequences have been thoroughly examined. That fresh ideas from lesser voices are not necessarily reckless may be illustrated by a reminder that the idea of the North Atlantic Treaty itself was first floated in public speeches by a Canadian prime minister before it was a subject ready for negotiation.

This argument for heresy is intended partly as justification in advance for some personal unorthodoxy in this paper. Governments and alliances are inevitably cliché-ridden. They must indeed be cautious about moving away from the established clichés about unity and purity, although they should beware of creating by their rhetoric a hot-house atmosphere which smothers the critical faculty. My quarrel is not with NATO practice, but with NATO preaching. My purpose is to raise questions about fashionable assumptions of our alliance which might seem captious and irresponsible if regarded as a positive philosophy for NATO rather than as a reaction to what seem to me confusions in the canons, or at least the rhetoric, of contemporary Atlanticism. It is *a* Canadian perspective but certainly not *the* Canadian perspective; the public statements of Canadians are as rich as any in banalities about the North Atlantic world, although our policies are fortunately more pragmatic than our utterances. Nothing in this paper is intended to question the continuing and basic importance of the military alliance of the North Atlantic countries. At the moment, however, it seems to me that undiscriminating pleas for NATO unity are creating confusion and dismay because they conflict, and are bound to conflict, with the realities of members' policies in the North Atlantic and in the world at large.

The Variant Requirements of Defense and Diplomacy

There are in NATO contradictions between military and diplomatic requirements.

Unity of command and coordination all down the line obviously make for an effective fighting posture. The task of coordination would naturally be simpler if NATO forces were responsible to a single federal government of which they were all subjects or citizens—provided, of course, anything so unwieldy as a NATO government could have an effective and forthright policy on anything. Most member governments do recognize

the necessity of surrendering much more of their independent control over military matters than over political or economic policy. The genuine federal solution being out of the question, however, most NATO members are sensible enough to steer clear of a phony federal solution, the worst of all possible methods for creating an effective alliance. While insisting on as much interallied coordination and consultation as possible, they shy away from the paralysis inherent in proposals for placing all hands on the trigger. Knowing that ultimately it is the strength and determination of the country that holds the chips rather than the unity of the alliance which acts as a deterrent, they accept, tacitly for the most part, the decisive role of the United States. Dissenters prefer to develop their "independent" nuclear power rather than hold out for multiple control. Whether or not these "independent" deterrents are wise or effective, it is better that dissent take this form than lead us into schemes for tripartite or even multipartite direction of policy which would break down in a crisis.

In the field of diplomacy, the interests of member nations are far more diversified, and a common foreign policy has proved impossible to achieve. It is persistently assumed, nevertheless, that it would be a good thing if we could achieve it. One cannot, of course, argue against perfection, and if we could all think in unison on Cyprus, chickens, or Mozambique, that would indeed be a heavenly situation. On earth we are not going to, however, and it is not just rationalization to argue that we are stronger as a team for our diversity.

The Argument Against Uniformity

While there are, and always will be, many real problems troubling NATO, some of them seem to be psychiatric. We are driven mad by abstractions—searching for symmetry and unity, making ends out of means, ignoring the virtue of untidiness in an untidy world, seeking to define the undefinable and evoking a mood of despair about the fortunes

of the Atlantic world when we might better feel the reasonable confidence which is justified by things as they work out in practice. This is not to say that the differences which threaten the alliance, and specifically the differences between France and the United States, should be ignored. It is healthier, however, to look at the practical results of this difference rather than to judge it always in accordance with the hysterical belief that every difference among the allies is fatal for us and an enormous boon to our antagonists. It is certainly better for the allies to agree than to disagree if they can, provided, of course, that the policy they agree on is a good one. It was better, however, for them to be divided over Suez, the Congo, or the Bay of Pigs than, in accordance with an abstract belief in unity, to present a common front in support of the unwise policies of one or more of their members. The apostles of unity tend to assume against all evidence that unity means we shall all be united behind policies which are eminently wise. There are times, however, when members should remain disengaged in order to do what they can to bail out their foolish partners and avoid the opprobrium which the latter have brought upon "the West."

On certain issues of crucial military importance such as the protection of Berlin or, even outside the NATO area, the confrontation over missiles in Cuba, it is highly desirable if not essential that the allies maintain a united front. The importance of unity in any given situation depends, however, on where the strength lies. In the case of Berlin it would seem essential that at least the United States and Germany stand together, and highly desirable that the whole alliance be in agreement. In the case of Cuba the solidarity of the allies certainly assisted the United States in its brinkmanship, but it is by no means certain that it was the major factor in the Soviet decision to back down. Khrushchev has shown a shrewd recognition that it is the strength of the United States rather than the fact of the alliance which is the decisive deterrent. It is true, of course, that the morale of the alliance may be

sapped by persistent differences over major issues, but the extent of the damage depends upon the circumstances of the issue. Often more damage can be done to the spirit of fraternity by resentment of members against the compulsion to alignment against their own judgment. Permanent damage would be done if panicky demands for conformity led members into the fallacy of believing that by setting up quasi-federal or any other compulsive institutions they could induce uniformity in so inchoate a collection of nations as is contained within the membership of NATO or, more widely interpreted, the Atlantic Community.

It is by no means certain that General de Gaulle's differences with the United States over European affairs and his intervention in Latin America bring cheer to the Kremlin. As a third power in the foetid atmosphere of Pan America, Gaullism, if it has anything behind it, could be more of a threat to Castroism than to the United States. As for his attitude toward China, in the first place there is reason to conclude that on balance it has been a good rather than a bad thing that Britain and other NATO allies have had relations of some kind with Peking when the United States had not: the imminent conquest of all Indo-China by the Communists in 1954 would probably not have been forestalled by the Geneva truces if Sir Anthony Eden had not been able to talk to Chou En-lai while the Chinese were being frightened by U.S. threats of retaliation. Variations in the China policies of Britain, France, and the United States were tactically useful in persuading the Communists to a truce, although on the other hand the withdrawal of the United States from a united front at the signature stage seriously prejudiced whatever chances there were of stabilizing the area on the basis of the truce. There is a good deal to be said at present for contact between a major Western leader and the outlaws in Peking, although this advantage must be weighed against the effect French deviation would have on the prospects for success of the uncompromising policy which the United States, in its own wisdom, has decided to pursue in Vietnam.

The argument is not that diversity and disunity are advisable; it is that they are not always as bad as they are proclaimed to be in principle, and sometimes diversity strengthens the diplomatic arm of the West.

Some allowance should perhaps be made here for the fact that lesser powers in NATO have long been suspicious of cries for "NATO unity." To us this has been the siren call to support whatever our larger brothers wanted to do on their own. When the French used to expect us in the name of NATO to support them over Algeria, for instance, they never suggested that there should be any sharing of decisions on policy in Algeria. They could certainly not be blamed for failing to take Canada or Norway into their counsels on so delicate a matter as Algeria. It is necessary, however, to accept the consequences of the fact that where there is and can be no unity in policy making, unity of support cannot be expected.

If what is wanted is a united Atlantic foreign policy, we cannot get around this fundamental dilemma with rhetoric about common purposes. Nor can we get around it by fondly believing that we can go much further than at present to achieve unity in policy making. Even in a limited European political union it is doubtful if the product would be one strong nation with a single powerful policy towards the rest of the world acting as a beneficient "third force," as claimed by many Europeanists. It might very well turn out to be an association pledged to unity and therefore obliged to settle for something half way between Oslo and Lisbon—a policy based on the lowest common denominator, with a collective voice much weaker than that of the historic nations of Europe. In a century, or even a generation, Europeans might feel like a nation, but they cannot neglect the need to be strong in the crucial meantime. We went through this issue of a common foreign policy in the Commonwealth and learned a good deal. During the last war and shortly after there were voices raised in Britain and Australia for a Commonwealth with a single foreign policy. The Australians thought this would give them some control over British policy, and the British advocates fondly

thought of an empire in which the real decisions would be taken in London and supported in world councils by six or more votes instead of one—an ingenuous assumption one suspects is at the bottom of proposals from the greater powers now for a common NATO policy toward the world. The vision was dissipated in London when it became clear that British intentions under such an arrangement were subject to veto from distant and presumably irresponsible capitals. If in the Commonwealth we had prescribed unanimity, we would have prescribed a rigidity bound to crack at the first major test. When the goal is the achievement not of alignment but of a maximum amount of mutual understanding, then countries can remain in the association even after they have differed on an issue. It is perfectly true, of course, that the amount of common purpose achieved in the Commonwealth under this loose system has been well below maximum, but it does not follow that the results would have been better if we had been confined in a framework so tight that, unable to use our elbows, we would have been tempted to use our fists. The analogy is not exact, of course; NATO has a task that requires more cohesion than the Commonwealth, but it has to cope with political attitudes and interests no less diverse.

The Function of Lesser Powers

In the Atlantic Community we have great powers, middle powers, and small powers, each with its own historical and geographical associations. I cannot think that the prospects of world peace would be improved if they were all welded into one mass. Great powers, of course, lack comprehension of the role of middle powers, and middle powers have a tendency to exaggerate their importance in the scheme of things. The role of a middle power may be more specific, but it is certainly no more virtuous than that of the large ally; it is not even possible without the great powers holding the ring. Nevertheless, the

secondary role of the middle power in international diplomacy is worth preserving.

Would we be stronger today if the Scandinavian countries had been so tightly bound to a united Europe or Atlantica that the Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, and Finns would not have been acceptable in international truce forces or as mediators? What would the United Nations have achieved without Scandinavian secretaries general? Consider the remarkable contribution that Ireland has made not only in supplying forces for the Congo and Cyprus but in the tricky diplomacy of the United Nations. It could not have done so if it had been bound to a united European or Atlantic foreign policy. Each of us is unique, and there are unique ways in which we can serve the cause of peace. It is difficult to think of any country so useful in the world as Switzerland, and yet there are those with such an unreasoning prejudice against neutrality that they would penalize Switzerland within Europe for its services. We may yet have wars like Korea in which the Swiss can play their indispensable part, and we are certain to have need of them to act as they have for the French and British in Cairo and the Americans in Havana, or between French and Algerians. What would we do without Geneva—or Vienna—for diplomatic encounters impossible elsewhere? There is no need for any other country to follow the Swiss model, but let us not in our passion for unity and uniformity destroy what is unique and valuable. Some of these countries are much more useful neutral than armed at our side, and even within NATO there is room for diversity short of neutrality. Norwegians, Danes, and Canadians have been able to participate effectively in various mediatory exercises while still contributing to NATO and remaining aligned on basic NATO issues. It is in our power to achieve more for the common good in international diplomacy if we resist a policy of automatic alignment. United Nations or other international truce or mediatory forces are no substitute for NATO force under present circumstances, but they play an indispensable

and complementary part in the continuing struggle with anarchy in the world.

The Federalist Fallacy

The passion for uniformity is usually expressed in a credulous predilection for federalistic institutions, associated no doubt with the widespread but dubious assumption that progress in the international community must inevitably proceed through regional agglomerations to the monstrous leviathan of world federation. Trouble comes when the enthusiasts assume that the unity they devoutly wish for does in fact exist. If there existed in fact even as much consensus from Sicily to Scotland as there exists from Florida to Oregon, the argument for a common Western European foreign policy would be strong. If Western Europe, however, has not an adequate consensus to permit even the EEC members to submit to common decisions on foreign policy, how much more unreal would it be to act on the assumption that there is a consensus from Alaska to Turkey? To assume that it exists because it ought to exist or that a Council of Ministers could compel it to exist, and to establish institutions under the spell of that illusion, is to court disaster. Ancient nations and new nations alike need room to breathe. Agreement is induced more readily when they are tied together loosely than too tightly. In Canada after two centuries of experiment in which two of the great peoples of Europe have been living within a single political framework, we are realizing that the corset must be adjusted for a two-way stretch if friction is to be contained.

The search for agreement is not helped by pious denunciations of sovereignty in the abstract. Exorcising national sovereignty is not going to remove the problems of jurisdiction or conflict of interests endemic in a world disorderly by nature. The bloodiest war of the nineteenth century was caused not by the assertion of national sovereignty but by the problem of jurisdiction within the sovereign state. Nor is the

cause aided by unctuous pleas to rise above petty nationalism coming from large states which have cultivated more intense national feeling and more jealous regard for their sovereignty than their docile partners. The largest powers, furthermore, far from submerging their identity in a broader political organism, could confidently expect to dominate it politically and culturally. It would be grossly unfair to accuse the United States of calculating aggrandizement or even of hypocrisy when Americans call upon their allies to surrender their national controls to common institutions, and yet lesser countries cannot fail to foresee that such institutions would in practice lead to an extension of American control and domination over their policies. No fair minded person should argue that the United States in advocating a multilateral nuclear force is seeking to add to the forces under its control a polyglot fleet of mercenaries, but this seems about what it would amount to. The incompatibility stems not from American arrogance but from American power. Congress is generous and internationalist, prepared to offer American aid and American protection but in no way to surrender its right to decide American foreign policy.

Neither the United States nor any of the other allies could accept North Atlantic institutions in which decisions were made by simple majority or even a weighted majority because the United States, which has a near monopoly of the crucial weapons, could not permit a veto on its freedom of movement and the rest of us could not in such an unequal situation give up our right to dissent and contract out. In practice, of course, and that is what matters, the United States is most unlikely ever to act in ruthless disregard of the views of its allies; and the latter are unlikely ever to be so reckless as to put themselves beyond the bounds of the alliance. To acknowledge formally the priority of the United States among the allies would rouse even more trouble than the French proposal for accepting a tripartite leadership. Nevertheless, members of the alliance understand even

when they do not admit the United States role. So why not leave well enough alone? Leaving well enough alone allows, furthermore, for the unostentatious adjustments which may be required to accord with shifts of power and policy which are bound to take place within the alliance. It is doubtless easier for a Canadian, haunted by less history than a European and safer under the umbrella, to accept the American priority in Atlantic diplomacy and strategy. Are not we all, however, better off coping with the facts of that priority which may be adjustable than with established definitions of what really goes on which would be offensive to admit?

It must be recognized, of course, that failure to create new decision-making bodies leaves the great powers free to make unilateral decisions. They are going to do so anyway, and it may be better not to complicate crises with the bitterness of broken promises. Britain and France did not consult their allies from whom they wanted support over Suez, and the United States did not consult its allies over its reaction to Cuban missiles; in neither case was it simply because they didn't want to, but rather because they couldn't. In operations of this kind they don't even risk telling their own senior officials. How could they fell foreigners? This is a fact of life about the great decisions which we have to live with. It does not mean, of course, that we cannot and should not consult about our continuing policies which shape the world and determine whether crises will erupt.

These facts of life are not altered by exaggerating the unity or danger of the Communist bloc as an argument for drastic measures on our part. There is a *non sequitur* in the apocalyptic argument that the threat is so great it must be met with federation. If desperate measures are needed, why try something least likely to succeed? It might better be argued that the threat is so great we should all, according to Soviet models, become satellites of our all-powerful leader, the

United States. That is neither an ideal nor lasting formula, but if the worst came to the worst, I would have more confidence in it than in the paralysis of power resulting from an Atlantic federation.

When Is an Alliance Not an Alliance?

There are reasons for dropping the word "alliance" altogether in dealing with the NATO community because the concept of it as an alliance in the classical sense is misleading. It would be better to use — or at least to think in — Max Lerner's term "power cluster," if it were not for the fact that one cannot rally devotion to a "North Atlantic Power Cluster." Devotion and loyalty inspired by appeals to a higher patriotism will in fact be required from members so long as NATO serves an essential security function. We should not be so bemused, however, as to fail to see the reality beneath the rhetoric. NATO is certainly not in any literal sense an association of "free and equal partners." It is a "power cluster" with the United States, in Lerner's phrase, its "epicentre." We should not forget either, as Atlantic isolationists are inclined to do, that the "power cluster" of which the United States is "epicentre" includes countries in the Pacific, South Atlantic, and other regions no less important in the American scheme of things than members of NATO. "The United States," according to William Lee Miller, "is technically one ally in a set of alliances, but actually a superpower with many lesser affiliated powers. She has in fact a large impact on her associates, but she is debarred by her own tradition and the nature of the association from the more blatant impositions of her will."[1]

The United States is not so much our ally as our "champion," as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary thus: "Person who fights, argues, etc. for another or for a cause." The resources of the United States and its lesser allies are so disproportionate that the military contribution of most of the latter is marginal, justifiable more for

political than military reasons. The role of the United States is threefold. The United States is able and disposed, although not necessarily committed, to defend its allies from attack and the threat of attack, out of concern for their welfare and also for its own paramount interest in discouraging aggression anywhere. Secondly, it maintains its end of the duel of deterrence. A third function is to carry on the dialogue with the Soviet Union through which we might all hope to move on toward a more stable balance of forces. It is the common aim to break out of this transitional stage into a more stable world order in which right and justice are less directly associated with pressure and compromise. In the meantime, nevertheless, the allies of the United States must bear in mind constantly the significance of American strength for whatever stability they have in the world today.

These hard facts are too often obscured beneath the phraseology of alliance which implies more of a community effort in the raising of levies and the determination of policy than is obtainable or even desirable. NATO military and strategic policies may be the product of combined decisions in theory, but these decisions are largely dictated by the national policies of those who control not only the decisive forces but also the rhythm of technological development. One reason for obscurity is the reluctance of the United States, for sound diplomatic reasons and a disinclination to assume the global burden, to define honestly its position in the "alliance." By its actions, on the other hand, it makes clear its view of the relationship to its allies, as for instance in its unhesitating adherence to its own policy in the Cuban crisis or its determination to pursue limited talks with the Russians in spite of the reservations of Paris and Bonn. The United States would prefer to act in concert with its allies, but if it can't it may be expected to act anyway. The allies are valuable to the United States even if the alliance is something of a mirage. The United States Administration is strengthened both in dealing with Congress and in

appealing to world opinion by appearing as one member of a strong association. And whatever the military realities, "the West" is politically stronger if it can appear as a mutual-benefit association. Herein lies an inescapable paradox.

Alignment or Nonalignment

In the enormous dialogue into which the world may be moving, one voice may be better than several both for strategy and negotiation. The illusion that there can be a clear, firm voice emanating from the collectivity of NATO dies hard. In present circumstances the United States has the responsibility almost alone to match actions and words, calculate threats and promises. It has the specialized information and expertise against which allies find difficulty even in maintaining an argument. The logic for the allies to remain docile is clear, but on the other hand it is quite incompatible with public attitudes. Nations persist and cannot be wished away. Their pride and sense of responsibility are as much a force for good in the world as for ill. Sensible allies will, however, recognize limits to their freedom of action, and herein lies the significance of the Cuban crisis of October, 1962.

From the beginning of the Castro regime there had been tactical differences between policies of the United States and those of the major allies towards Cuba. Although Castro was regarded with apprehension, a majority of Western Europeans and Canadians doubted the wisdom of United States policy towards the troublesome island. Although consultation — or rather explanation — is continuous among the allies on dangerous situations, the allies had never been seriously engaged in the formulation of American policy or tactics towards Cuba. The matter was treated as one for the OAS rather than NATO, a course certainly justified by the rules both of OAS and NATO but of dubious strategic validity nevertheless. However, when the crisis came and the gauntlet was thrown, the allies recognized that the ranks had to be closed.

The NATO nations knew they had to take cover with their champion right or wrong. Deductions from this experience, however, should be discriminating. To assume that since in the "crunch" allies always stand with the United States they have no room for maneuvre between crises is to ignore the facts of their behavior. Few of them, even after the crisis, aligned their tactics towards Cuba with those of Washington. The Cuban crisis did not prove that the allies would or should seek agreement and act in concert in a moment of crisis. It proved simply that if the United States challenged a Communist opponent the allies would be likely to recognize a fundamental interest in supporting their champion right or wrong.

The argument for undeviating alignment within the alliance rests too often on an oversimplified view of the forces loose in the world. It assumes that the world is divided into two camps and that nothing else matters except the struggle for dominance between them. The need to maintain Western strength against the Communist threat may often be the determining factor, but to assume that any single frame of reference could guide all the decisions of a modern country in foreign policy is too much like Marxism for free peoples. The upheaval involved in the transition from an imperial world to a world of universal self-government makes the factors much more complex. Nor can one disassociate from political diplomacy the struggle for trade which divides the nations on non-cold war lines. The bipolarization of the world into which we have been forced is a dangerous and undesirable state of affairs from which we should seek to burst as soon as possible. The cracking of the monolithic structure of the Communist realm presents us with opportunities. The French assertion of independence may be a dangerous disruption of unity, but it can be said in its favor that it represents an effort to break through the crusted framework in which we have been congealed for too many years, to loosen international society, and by permitting freedom of national expression to reduce the

danger of catastrophe. Close alignment, the unity of the West, cannot be lightly abandoned as principles, but the world will be better off when we can abandon them -- when nations can join together for specific purposes and realign themselves with other nations when different interests are involved, when the pragmatists triumph over the absolutists.

What Is the Atlantic Community?

The whole concept of an Atlantic Community requires respectful and skeptical examination. It seems to me that what we should seek to achieve by the idea of the Atlantic Community is something deeper than the concoction of a new federation or a new political entity of any kind. It is the strengthening and preservation of a civilization which, although it has its roots in the Mediterranean - North Atlantic area, is universally pervasive. Because that civilization is threatened by the military power of a bloc which only partially shares its tenets and by the danger of anarchy in the world at large, and because the vast preponderance of military power outside the Communist bloc is to be found in this area, we countries of the North Atlantic have to collaborate closely in military affairs. This is the persisting reason for NATO, and NATO is the satisfactory functional agency to achieve this purpose. Because it is also essential to maintain understanding and a sense of common purpose among the principal custodians of that civilization, we also need agencies like the NATO Council in which to discuss our policies together. We also need bodies like the NATO Parliamentary Association through which understanding can broaden into wider circles. Then there is the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a body devoted to stimulating the wealth of Europe and America for the benefit of itself and the world at large. What is significant and encouraging, however, is that the OECD, originally a European and then a North Atlantic association, has recognized by inviting Japan to membership that its function cannot be geographically circumscribed.

These functional bodies are, I suggest, all we need for our essential purposes — except for the will to understand, without which no conciliar bodies are of any use at all. The will to understand, however, requires effort and study and unceasing exertion; too many people, therefore, concentrate not on the substance of unity but on the erection of shadowy constitutions which, they fondly assume, will circumvent disagreement by imposing unity.

The trouble with defining the Atlantic Community is that is has no bounds. Its political and cultural ideas are more deeply rooted in Delhi or Dakar than in some regions washed by the sacred waters of the North Atlantic. The concocters of North Atlantic unions usually pay lipservice to this fact by adding the postscript that other countries may graciously be permitted to come in later. What other countries? Half-civilized states like Australia, Japan, Jamaica, or Uruguay? It is when one tries to draw up a membership list that one realizes the futility of seeing this institution in geographical and constitutional terms. How can you draw a frontier round the Atlantic spirit without destroying it? How could the United States or Britain or France or even Canada tie itself to an entity which could limit its scope to find common cause with countries in the four corners of the earth? The act of definition would be essentially a separation of sheep and goats, but the creation of unity on a selective basis inevitably stimulates disunity on a broader basis. The tightening of the alliance of the Western European peoples can make more difficult conciliation and reconciliation with the other races; and this latter is the major problem of our time. It is often argued that the North Atlantic races must form their own bloc to defend themselves against the blocs being formed in Africa, Asia, in Latin America, and by the combination of all of them in the United Nations. But how can one seriously compare the laudable but tentative endeavor of the weak and divided peoples of Africa, for instance, groping towards mutual understanding and collaboration among themselves, with the creation of

a close federation of power and wealth in the North Atlantic? As for the so-called "Afro-Asian bloc" in the United Nations, there are real problems presented by the occasional united front of non-Europeans in what look to us like dubious causes, but for the most part this "bloc" is a myth and a bogey kept alive by those who want to shake free from a universal international organization and create a pure white substitute in the guise of a North Atlantic Community. This motive, justified only by panic, is an abdication of the mission of the North Atlantic peoples.

The Atlantic Community is a spiritual idea and it has a function. That function is to use the enormous wealth and power and skill of the area to protect the weak and stimulate prosperity for this and other areas. Its function is initiative — to save the world, not itself alone. It can be the core of a new internationalism, or it can be the instrument of racial isolationists. Our function is to promote our mission rather than our unity. Our defense arrangements and our instruments of consultation are not perfect, and we may find better mechanisms, but the test of these mechanisms is whether they enable us better to play our part in the world than to shut us off from it.

Footnote:

[1] *Alliance Policy in the Cold War*, ed. Arnold Wolfers (Baltimore, 1959), p. 33.